



Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 5b
October 22, 2019

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TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner *A. Infante*

RE: Recommendation of Chair and Nominee to the Central Falls Board of Trustees

The Rhode Island Department of Education is recommending the following nominee as Chair of the Central Falls Board of Trustees:

- **Stephanie Gonzalez**

And furthermore, the following nominee to fill a vacancy on the Central Falls Board of Trustees:

- **Bryant Estrada**

I have spoken with both candidates on their background, qualifications, and goals, and I am confident that they possess the experience and commitment to advance the goals and mission of the Central Falls School District.

RECOMMENDATION: That, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the recommendation of Stephanie Gonzalez as Chair and Bryant Estrada as a Member, of the Central Falls Board of Trustees, as presented.

October 7, 2019

Dear Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education,

It is with great humility that I ask you to consider my candidacy to be Chair of the Central Falls School Board of Trustees.

I am a proud product of the Central Falls School District. I was one of the few students in my class to go on to college after graduation. I am not of the mindset that schools should force students to go to college, but I do believe wholeheartedly in college-going cultures because college degrees have the potential to change the lives of young people and their families. I believe this because my degree opened doors for my own family. It helped propel us into the middle class. Every Central Falls student and family deserves that.

In 2011, I was appointed by Commissioner Gist to the Central Falls School Board of Trustees. I joined the board shortly after the Board of Trustees had made incredibly difficult decisions about major interventions in our schools. This meant that I was a new board member when the district was in many ways putting itself back together. Morale amongst staff was the lowest it had been and administrators had to work to build trust with teachers, parents, and students once again.

I'm proud of the work that has taken place since my initial appointment. Graduation rates increased at Central Falls High School, we have shifted to center equitable practices for English Learners (including opening Raices Dual Language Academy), we significantly decreased the number of differently-abled students who were served out of district, and we have focused on embedding a college-going culture thanks to our innovative partnership with Rhode Island College, among other efforts. And yet, all of these "wins" have not amounted to systemic change in the district.

I believe it is my responsibility to be honest and share that I am extremely concerned with the state of Central Falls Schools. Just last week at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, a middle school EL teacher shared with us that her classroom has thirty-one students where there should only be twenty-three students. She doesn't have enough desks for all of them to sit. Can you imagine? That should outrage you as much as it did me when I heard it. The issue of classroom overages is pervasive in our schools and is one of the most pressing concerns I have at the moment.

I share that example because while I am excited about the opportunity to support the Central Falls School District in this leadership capacity, I am also feeling urgent about our need to act boldly in order to do right by the students in our district. Anything less than urgency and bold action is unacceptable and we're already years too late.

If this Council accepts the Commissioner's recommendation to appoint me as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I will fight as hard as I can to ensure that Central Falls School District students are valued by stakeholders across the state the way they deserve to be. That means an equitable and sustaining funding solution. It means that teachers will not have to teach in classrooms where there aren't enough desks for students to sit in.. It means properly funding English Learners. It means having our after school programming restored. It means that the

district will stop having to make dramatic cuts that hurt our most important stakeholders: our students. It also means a commitment to enrollment equity by public charter schools serving our students. It means all of that and more.

I look forward to acting urgently and boldly on behalf of the 2900 students in the Central Falls School District alongside this Council.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Gonzalez

STEPHANIE GONZALEZ
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EDUCATION:

Roger Williams University School of Law, Bristol, Rhode Island
Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2021

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
Bachelor of Arts in English, May 2008

EXPERIENCE:

Blackstone Valley Prep, Cumberland, RI

Associate Director of Partnerships

August 2016 – June 2019

Cultivated and formalized relationships with external partners, built a tiered career awareness program for the district's high school, tracked legislation and identified legislative priorities for the schools. Wrote and managed grants to support school-wide advocacy efforts.

Family Advocacy and Outreach Associate

November 2014 – August

2016 Implemented programming/curriculum for parents, managed grants associated with scope of work, created processes at each school to help improve family engagement, analyzed trimester parent survey data to inform changes in school operations. Additionally, this role focused on tracking education-related RI legislation.

Boston Children's Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts

Project Manager

April 2012 – November 2014

Oversaw implementation of Standardized Clinical Assessment and Management Plans for the hospital, served as a communication liaison between Director of Operations, Program Manager, Data Coordinators, and Clinicians throughout the hospital. Additionally, created ad-hoc reports mainly around project status/progress, patient enrollment, and clinician compliance in order to make informed data-driven decisions regarding process and operational issues for our projects.

Research Data Coordinator

October 2011 – April 2012

Developed and implemented Standardized Clinical Assessment and Management Plans for hospital departments and divisions in conjunction with respective clinical teams. Screened and enrolled patients for various projects. Creatively defined practical solutions for projects being implemented on various clinics and floors.

Brigham and Women's Hospital

Research Assistant I

April 2009–October 2011

Oversaw the progress of numerous research studies that were being implemented simultaneously. Abstracted data from various medical records/data systems surveys, and questionnaires.

PERSONAL:

President/Founder, Central Falls Alumni Association – 2014 - **present**

Trustee, Central Falls School Board of Trustees – February 2011 – **present**

Co-founder, Parents Leading for Educational Equity – December 2018 - **present**

SPECIAL SKILLS: Fluent in Spanish. Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, Outlook, PowerPoint, Visio

PUBLICATIONS:

Chang, G; Orav EJ; Jones JA; Buynitsky T; Gonzalez S; Wilkins-Haung L. Self-reported alcohol and drug use in pregnant young women: pilot study of prevalence and associated factors. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*.

Chang, G; Weiss PA; Orav EJ; Jones JA; Gonzalez S; Kosowsky J; Rauch LS. Bottlenecks in the Emergency Department: the psychiatric clinicians' perspective. *General Hospital Psychiatry*.

Candidate to the Central Falls Board of Trustees

Name: **Bryant Alberto Estrada**

1. Background:

What led you to be interested in serving on the Board of Trustees?

The opening on the board was mentioned to me recently by Stephanie Gonzalez and Victor Capellan. After speaking with them and with Anna Cano Morales, I was able to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the board members, as well as the power they have to create change in the district. Despite this power and the potential of the district, not much has changed since I graduated in 2009, and I think it's time that change is made with our students' and families' best interest in mind. I think that my positioning as an educator, teacher, youth advocate, current resident, and CF K-12 alumnus sets me apart from others who may also be interested in becoming a member of the board.

2. Qualifications:

What qualities and strengths from your background and experience will you bring to the Board if you are chosen to serve?

I am aware that being on a board is a learning process, and I am a person who is driven and always willing to learn, challenge his views, and base decisions with best interest in mind. Although the experience has not been in the district, my role as a math teacher for the past few years has given me the opportunity to learn about present student experiences and teacher experiences in the classroom firsthand. This position allows me to have insights as it relates to classroom dynamics, teaching methods (e.g. culturally responsive pedagogy), and relationship building.

3. Goals:

Is there any particular area or initiative that you would like to focus on as a new member of the Board of Trustees?

Based on my experiences and knowledge regarding linguistics/literacy, mathematics, social justice and culturally responsive pedagogy, I would like to learn more about and challenge the various factors that have led to the historical equity gap that exists between the students of Central Falls and the rest of the students in the state.

BRYANT A. ESTRADA

12 MADISON AVENUE, CENTRAL FALLS, RI 02863 • (401) 699-5769 • BRYANT_ESTRADA@ALUMNI.BROWN.EDU

EDUCATION

Providence College, Providence, RI

- *M.Ed., Urban Teaching; GPA: 3.95* **Expected completion May 2020**
 - Thesis/Capstone Project explores the positive impacts of Teachers of Color on student achievement and engagement, and the benefits of recruiting and retaining Teachers of Color
- *Certification in Secondary Grades Mathematics, 7-12; GPA: 4.0* **Certification received Dec. 2016**

Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick/Lincoln, RI

Courses completed Dec. 2015

- *Coursework for teacher certification: (non-degree): College Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, Statistical Analysis I, History of Mathematics, Calculus I, Calculus II; GPA: 3.95*

Brown University, Providence, RI

Degree received May 2013

- *Bachelor of Arts, Education Studies: Human Development and Psychology; GPA: 3.2*
- *First Generation College Student Initiative Coordinator* (September 2012-May 2013) – designed and executed initiative program events, and created a mentoring program for first-generation college students

WORK EXPERIENCE

Blackstone Academy Charter School, Pawtucket, RI

High School Mathematics Teacher

August 2018-Present

- Develop and implement Geometry, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus curricula (e.g. scope and sequence, unit plans, lesson plans, instructional materials, formative and summative assessments, etc.) through culturally responsive pedagogy
- Collaborate with mathematics team to redesign Geometry curriculum by incorporating statistical reasoning in an effort to improve SAT results and increase access to and ensure success in higher education
- Support school-wide transformation to proficiency-based model by development of cross-curricular standards to meet Proficiency-based standards

Advisor

August 2018-Present

- Serve as a support system for and track progress of a small group of students throughout their high school career
- Incorporate curriculum based on socioemotional learning (SEL) and student needs
- Ensure school-to-home connection and communication to improve student outcomes

Equity Team Member

August 2019-Present

- Collaborate with educators, educator leaders, and community partners to examine data and create professional development sessions related to racial equity
- Support faculty/staff through awareness and acknowledgment of implicit biases that have a negative effect on pedagogy, student engagement, and achievement

Segue Institute for Learning, Central Falls, RI

8th Grade Mathematics Teacher

September 2016-June 2018

- Developed and implemented 8th grade Common Core math aligned curriculum
- Identified, selected, and modified instructional resources and materials to meet the needs of students with varying backgrounds, learning styles, and individual needs
- Collected, analyzed, and utilized formative and summative assessment data for the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

Alumni Coordinator

September 2015-June 2016

- Supported high school students and families academically and socially via tutoring, job/internship opportunity search, and creating a positive peer network
- Assisted higher education accessibility by organizing and coordinating college/career counseling, and planning (including support with college applications, entrance exam preparation), and supporting with financial aid and scholarship applications

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **City of Central Falls Board of Canvassers**, Board Member, June 2018-Present
- **Central Falls Alumni Association** (CFAA), Founding Board Member, 2014-Present
- **New Leaders Council**, 2016 Fellow & 2017-2018 Alumni Committee Co-Chair
- **City of a Pawtucket Juvenile Hearing Board**, 2014-2016 Board Member

SKILLS & EXPERTISE

- **Languages:** Spanish (fluent in writing, reading, and speaking)
- **Technology:** Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat/Reader, Mac OS X, Windows, GSuite for Education